

# Art at home!

## Plein-air Drawing

En plein-air, French for “outdoors” or “in the open air,” is the act of drawing or painting outside. This method grew popular in the 19th century when working in natural light became popular. The technique was used all over the world. It was seen in France, Italy, England and America. Eventually the box easel was invented to accommodate artists in their pursuit of creativity. The box easel was portable, allowing artists to go out in nature to create their work. Many famous impressionist artists, like Claude Monet, actively used the plein-air technique, believing the best way to capture the essence of nature was to immerse yourself in it directly.

Similarly, the ASU Art Museum’s Artists’ Workshop features murals by artist Cruz Ortiz. Cruz visited Arizona and made several plein-air drawings and paintings to prepare for the murals he made.

We encourage you to use this tutorial as a way to slow down, observe your surroundings and spend some time outdoors.



### Materials:

- Backyard space or a patio.
- Table.
- Paper.
- Pencil.
- Eraser.
- If painting: paint, paint brushes, container with water to rinse brushes, cloth to wipe brushes.
- An easel (optional).

### How to:

#### Preparation:

1. Choose a spot from your backyard, private patio or window that has a view you like.
2. Gather your materials. If you have no easel, set up on a flat surface.
3. Note: Make sure you are comfortable whether outside or inside.

#### The drawing process:

1. Instead of drawing or painting everything you see, focus on one or two things from your view that interests you.
2. Optional: Make “thumb-nail” sketches of your scene on a small paper, practicing tones and shape arrangement. This can be good references for your final work.
3. Sketch the basic shapes of this scene. This step allows you to make easy adjustments in the composition.
4. Lightly map out the highlights and shadows of your scene.
5. Build the light and shadow areas in layers using pencil, or paint.
6. The natural light may change throughout your process depending on how long you work. So, you can take pictures of your object to use as a reference.
7. Continue drawing or painting until you are satisfied. Feel free to look up videos for more references.

That’s it! Now that you know how to approach plein-air drawing, and how to make one at home, have fun practicing your skills! Please share your experience and plein-air art with us on Instagram, Twitter or Facebook @asuartmuseum. See the links below for more history of plein-air art, and tips.

- Safety:**
- Use non-toxic paint for children.
  - For the safety of yourself and others, stay indoors if you have no private outdoors space.
  - Make sure the weather is suitable for this activity if you are outside.

# Art at home!

## Preparation:



## The drawing process:



## Links for Plein-Air History:

- “Outside The Lines” Plein Air Painting Documentary, Plein Air Force: <https://youtu.be/F86HvkQaz-o>
- What is Plein-Air: <https://www.artistsnetwork.com/art-subjects/plein-air/plein-air-art/>
- En Plein-Air: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/En\\_plein\\_air](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/En_plein_air)

## Links for tips:

- Plein Air Painting in the Backyard!: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=deuUQEBSKWQ>
- Painting En Plein Air - TOP TIPS for a successful scene!: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=frGJEjKff7Y>
- 7 Plein Air Painting Tips For Beginners: <https://drawpaintacademy.com/7-plein-air-painting-tips/>